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SHOT IN THE **DARK**

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★ No. 91 **COVER OF DARKNESS**

His was a fighting spirit that would never die . . .

★ No. 92 **ONE MAN'S GLORY**

Bofors v. Panzers . . . in a duel to destruction

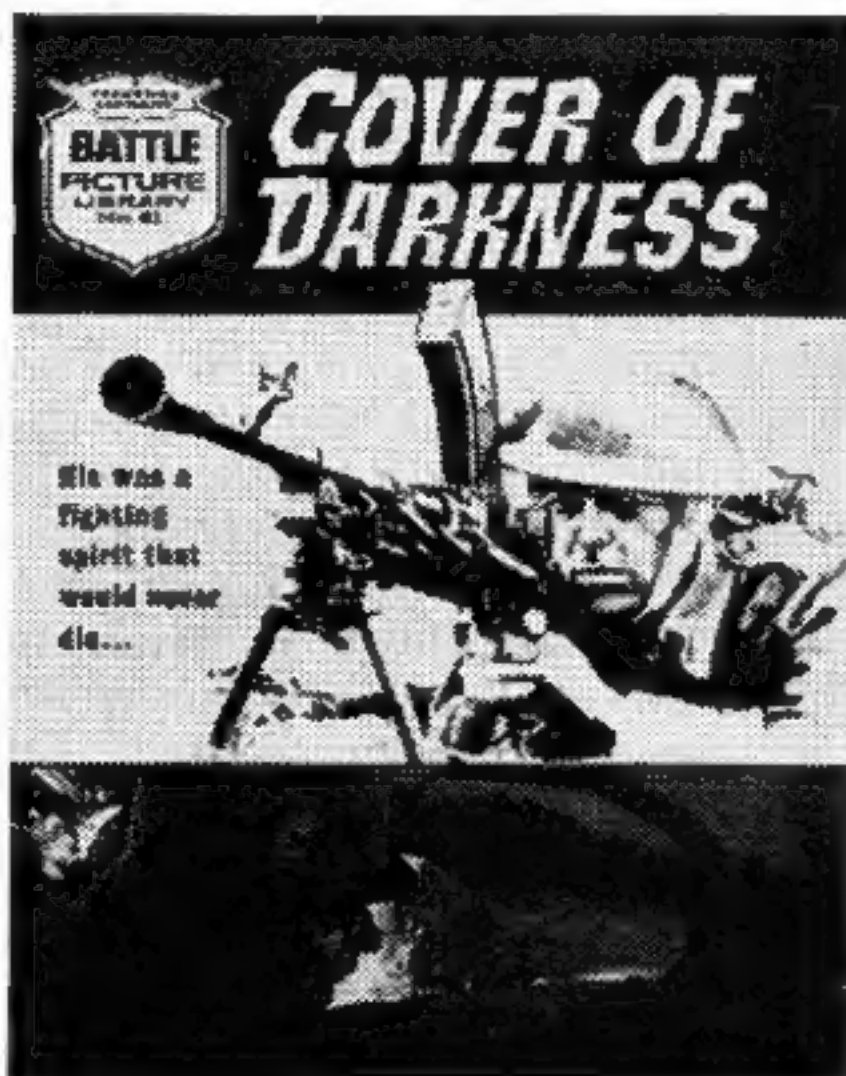
BATTLE PICTURE LIBRARY

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SHOT IN THE DARK

IN ORDER TO STAY ALIVE, THE SOLDIER MUST BUILD HIS OWN WALL OF PROTECTION FROM THE ELEMENTS OF CUNNING AND COURAGE WITHIN HIMSELF, THEN HE MUST SMOTHER HIS NATURAL SYMPATHIES UNDER AN ARMOUR OF HARDNESS...



Chapter 1. Mutiny

IT WAS JANUARY, 1942. FOR FIVE DAYS THE BRITISH COLUMN HAD HACKED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE BURMESE JUNGLE. THE SUFFERINGS OF HIS COMRADES ONLY HEIGHTENED THE NIGHTMARE OF WAR FOR CORPORAL CON TRACE...



I'VE HAD IT, MATE!
I CAN'T... GO NO
FARTHER...

CORPORAL!
GREEN'S
COLLAPSED!

A WEEK BEFORE, THE JAPANESE ARMIES HAD POURED ACROSS THE FRONTIERS OF SIAM INTO BURMA. SO FAR, NONE OF THE MEN IN THE PATROL HAD SET EYES ON A JAP. ONLY ONE OF THEM KNEW WHERE THEY WERE GOING... AND WHY...

STICK IT, GREEN!
IT'LL BE DARK
SOON, THEN YOU
CAN HAVE A
NICE LONG
REST!

FAT'S NO... USE,
CORP! MY LEGS...
THEY'VE PACKED
UP ON ME...!



CON TRACEY LIFTED THE EXHAUSTED MAN UPRIGHT...

COME ON, MATE, I'LL HELP YOU! YOU CAN DO IT!

I'LL TRY, CON... I'LL TRY!

BY NOW, THE HEAD OF THE COLUMN WAS OUT OF SIGHT. THE MEN WHO HAD STAYED WITH TRACEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER WITH ANGLY EYES...

CON AGAIN... IT'S ALWAYS CON! THAT OTHER DEVIL WOULD HAVE LEFT GREEN BEHIND!

IT'S A RITTY TRACEY AN' IT COMMANDING THE CAPER INSTEAD OF THAT GLOOMY HUNTER FANE? HE'LL KILL US ALL!

Shot in the Dark

THE GOING GOT STEADILY TOUGHER. TRACEY WAS LAST NOW, HALF-CARRYING HIS LOLLING BURDEN UP THE MUDDY SLOPE OF A FOOTHILL...

KEEP TRYING, GREEN! YOU'RE DOING FINE, MATE!

LEAVE ME, CORP! JUST LEAVE ME... I'VE HAD IT!



THE OTHERS WERE WAITING FOR TRACEY IN THE CLEARING AT THE TOP OF THE HILL. ONE MAN STOOD UPRIGHT... A TALL, GAUNT MAN, WITH HARSH, RESTLESS EYES...

MY ORDERS WERE CLEAR, CORPORAL! ANY MAN WHO DROPS OUT GETS WATER AND RATIONS... BUT HE STAYS WHERE HE FALLS!

GREEN'LL BE ALL RIGHT, SIR! HE JUST NEEDS A LITTLE REST... LIKE WE ALL DO...



CAPTAIN PAUL FANE STIFFENED. HIS VOICE WAS QUIET, BUT HARD...

I'M SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, CORPORAL! WE'RE PUSHING ON! THERE WILL BE NO REST UNTIL WE REACH THAT VILLAGE!

BUT, SIR... THE MEN HAVE HAD ABOUT AS MUCH AS THEY CAN STAND!



FANE LOOKED LONELY STANDING THERE, A TOMMY-GUN GRIPPED IN HIS HANDS...

THAT'S ENOUGH, TRACEY! MY ORDERS ARE GOING TO BE CARRIED OUT... IF I HAVE TO KILL ANYONE WHO TRIES TO BUCK ME, NOW PUT THAT MAN DOWN!



THE MEN WERE SILENT AS TRACEY LOWERED GREEN GENTLY. THE CAPTAIN GLANCED BRIEFLY AT THE LIMP, HUDDLED SHAPE...

IF EVERYTHING WORKS OUT, WE'LL PICK HIM UP ON THE WAY BACK! THAT'S ALL WE CAN DO....



THEY MOVED OFF AGAIN, THROUGH THE DRIPPING GRASS AND THE WHITE BAMBOOS. CON TRACEY LOOKED BACK AT THE DROOPING SHAPE IN THE CLEARING...

GREEN'S HAD IT, CORP. HE HASN'T A CHANCE, LEFT ON HIS OWN IN THIS HELL-HOLE... AND FANE KNOWS IT!

YEAH... HE KNOWS IT, BUT FANE GIVES THE ORDERS, AND WE'VE GOT TO TAKE 'EM!



THE CORPORAL PUSHED ON UP THE COLUMN OF EXHAUSTED MEN. ALREADY, THEY WERE BEGINNING TO LAG BEHIND THE GAUNT, TIRELESS OFFICER WHO LED THEM.

THE MEN ARE RIGHT, FANE! YOU'RE JUST A GLORY HUNTER! THEY TOLD US THIS WAS A DEEP PATROL TO TEST JAP ACTIVITY! A FEW MINUTES EITHER WAY WOULDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE!



THEY KEPT MOVING THROUGH THE NIGHT. THE SUDDEN, ICKY CHILL WAS ALMOST AS BAD AS THE HEAT. BUT THE STUMBLING MEN DID NOT NOTICE THE COLD...



TWO HOURS AFTER DAWN, THEY HALTED BELOW AN EXPOSED RIDGE OF RUSSIAN GRASS. THE MEN STOOD THERE, MISERY ON THEIR FACES, AS THE CAPTAIN CALLED TO CON TRACEY...



Shot in the Dark

TRACEY HAD NO CHANCE TO TALK. THE CAPTAIN POINTED BRISKLY ACROSS THE JUNGLE AT THE BROWN THRUST OF A HILL ...

I THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING MOVE OVER THERE! MAYBE YOUR EYESIGHT'S KEENER THAN MINE, TRACEY! TAKE A LOOK THROUGH THESE GLASSES ...!



CON TRACEY HAD SHARP EYES. IT DID NOT TAKE HIM LONG TO PICK OUT THE LINE OF SOLDIERS MOVING BOLDLY ACROSS THE FLANK OF THE HILL ...

YOU WERE RIGHT, SIR! THEY'RE JAPS... ABOUT A DOZEN OF THEM...!



FANE WAS TURNING BACK TOWARDS THE CLEARING ALMOST BEFORE TRACEY HAD FINISHED ...

RIGHT! WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A DETOUR! ON YOUR FEET, YOU MEN! LET'S MOVE!

SIR...! WAIT A MINUTE!



FANE WHIRLED AS THE CORPORAL SHOUTED. THERE WAS A TRACE OF SARCASM IN THE TIGHT, FLAT VOICE ...

WELL, CORPORAL? HAVE YOU A BETTER IDEA?

YES, SIR! I SUGGEST WE POST LOOK-OUTS ON THE RIDGE WHILE THE OTHER MEN REST! AS SOON AS THE COUNTRY'S CLEAR, WE CAN MOVE ON!



TRACEY'S LOUD, EAGER VOICE HAD CARRIED TO THE OTHER MEN. THEY SHOULDERED FORWARD NOW, LED BY A STOCKY, BARREL-CHESTED PRIVATE...

HE HOPES
LET IT BE/ IT AIN'T SUPPOSED
DO NO HARM IF WE I
LOW FOR A HIT

YEAH..
THIS IS A
PATROL. NO
A DEATH
MARCH

YOU TELL
HIM, YORRY!



TRACEY HEARD THE MUTTERINGS OF DISCONTENT. THEY DISTURBED HIM A LITTLE. HIS VOICE WAS SLOW...

YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT, SIR! THE MEN
HAVE BEEN PUSHED TO'S HARD!

THAT'S ENOUGH,
TRACEY! WHEN
I SAYING ON, I SAID!
YOU'RE SOLDIERS...
NOT SCHOOLBOYS
ON A WALK!



THE BIG MAN, YORK, WAS STANDING BEHIND THE CAPTAIN. HE MOVED IT FAST, GROWLING LAUDEROUSLY, HE WAS HOLDING HIS RIFLE ...

NO, FANE! I'VE HAD ENOUGH... ENOUGH, D'YOU HEAR?

WHAT THE DEVIL ...?

YORK!
NO...



FANE WAS TWISTING WITH AN OATH ON HIS LIPS WHEN THE RIFLE BUTT HIT THE BACK OF HIS SKULL. HE COLLAPSED THEN, LIKE THE SOLDIER, GREEN, HAD COLLAPSED ...



TRACEY STARED UNEASILY AT THE SENSELESS FIGURE AT HIS FEET. BUT THE RAVAGED FACES AROUND HIM WERE DEFIANT...

YOU SHOULDN'T
HAVE DONE IT, YORK!
NOT THIS ...!

WHY NOT? HE'S LIKE
A MAD DOG! WOULD
YOU RATHER WE JUST
STOOD AROUND AND
LET HIM KILL US OFF
ONE BY ONE?

DON'T WORRY,
YORKY! IF FANE
BRINGS A CHARGE,
WE'LL BACK YOU
UP, MATE!



THE CORPORAL LOOKED ROUND
AT THE FILTHY, MUTINOUS MEN.
HIS VOICE HARDENED ...

WELL, IT'S DONE NOW! THERE'S NO
GOING BACK! YORK... YOU'D BETTER
TAKE FIRST STAG! GET UP ON THAT
RIDGE AND KEEP YOUR EYES SKINNED
FOR JOHNNY JAP! THE REST OF YOU
GRAB SOME SLEEP!

SLEEP!
NOW YOU'RE
TALKING,
CORP...!



PAUL FANE CAME ROUND TWO HOURS LATER. HE SAT UP, PLUCKING AT THE FRESH BANDAGE AROUND HIS HEAD. HE SAW THE SPRAWLED SHAPES OF THE SLEEPING MEN...

MY... MY HEAD!
TRACEY! WHAT
THE DEVIL'S
GONE ON?

TAKE IT
EASY, SIR!

THE CAPTAIN SWAYED UPRIGHT...

I'M SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED,
SIR... BUT THESE ARE MEN, NOT
ROBOTS WITHOUT FEELINGS!
LET THEM SLEEP! YOU'LL GET
MORE OUT OF 'EM!

YOU FOOL,
TRACEY! YOU
DON'T KNOW WHAT
YOU'VE DONE!

FANE'S HAPSH EYES SWEEPED THE RIDGE. PRIVATE YORK WAS SITTING AGAINST A TREE UP THERE. BUT HE WAS NOT LOOKING FOR JAPS...

THAT MAN...
HE'S ASLEEP!
AND WITH JAPS ABOUT!
GOOD GRIEF!

THE JAPS WERE CLOSER THAN FANG KNEW. THE PATROL, WHICH TRAGEDY HAD SIGHTED TWO HOURS BEFORE HAD MOVED EAST ALONG THE RIDGE. THE COMMANDER SAW THE CAPTAIN AS HE STRODE TOWARD YOK.

AETO!
HARRY ONE!



CON TRAGEDY WAS COMING UP HARD BEHIND THE CAPTAIN WHEN THE JAPS OPENED FIRE. FANG CRIED OUT, CLAWING HIS SHOULDER. THE HARSH SOUND JERKED PRIVATE YOK AWAKE ...

AAGH!

WHAT THE
JAPS!



THE JAPS WERE STILL FIRING AS TRACE FOUND THE WOUNDED CAPTAIN (OVER HIS SHOULDER HE POINTED DOWN INTO THE CLEARING, YELLING AT THE SLEEPING MEN, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE...)



BUT TRACE'S VOICE, THE WHIRLING LEAD, COULD NOT FULLY PENETRATE THE COGNOOK OF EXHAUSTION. SOME OF THE MEN FLED AS THEY JERKED AWAKE IN DAWN...



THE BRITISH WERE WIDE AWAKE AS THEY HIT THE JUNGLE. FEAR AND SHOCK DISSOLVED THE MISTS OF SLEEP. THE JAPS FOLLOWED THEM...



THEY WENT FAST THROUGH THE JUNGLE, WITH THE THICKETS WHIPPING AT THEIR BODIES. BUT THEY DID NOT GET VERY FAR FOR THEY CAME TO A HIGH, UNBROKEN WALL OF ROCK...



PAUL FANE WAS STILL UNCONSCIOUS. TRACEY DUMPED THE OFFICER BENEATH AN OVERHANG OF ROCK, SWUNG ROUND ON THE CRINGING MEN...

SPREAD OUT! FALL BACK AGAINST THE ROCK... AND KEEP FIRING!

WHAT AT, CORP? WE CAN'T EVEN SEE THE PERISHERS!

THERE WAS NO COVER IN THE CLEARING. THEY JUST HAD TO LIE THERE AND TAKE IT. THE SOLDIER CROUCHING NEXT TO CON TRACEY STARTED TO MOAN.

THEY'RE PICKING US OFF... ONE BY ONE! IT'S CURTAINS, I TELL YOU---

SHUT UP! SHUT UP!

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE WAS BUBBLING WITH FEAR WHEN THE CORPORAL SLAPPED HER ACROSS THE FACE. CON TRACEY WAS LEARNING TO FIGHT THE HARD WAY.

SNAP OUT OF IT!
GET A HOLD OF
YOURSELF! ALL WE
NEED NOW IS A
DOSE OF PAIS...

CORP! THE
CAPTAIN...!



TRACEY WHIRLED AT THE SHARP CRY PAUL FANE WAS GETTING UP. THERE WAS A HEAVY SERVICE .45 REVOLVER IN THE CAPTAIN'S HAND, AND HE WAS PUSHING THE MUZZLE TOWARDS HIS TEMPLE...

NO YOU
DON'T, FANE!



THE LAST OF THE 41 ANG. POWER.
FOLLOWING WHITE FLIGHT. THE
WOMAN WERE KILLED THE 31.
SUNNYLY AWAY. THERE WAS NO
HIT OF TRACEY'S FACE NOW...

"AND THE ENCAPSULATION
 OF THE AIRFRAME
 IN THE WHAT'S THE
 NAME OF, THANK YOU TO
 FACE WHAT MIGHT
 HAPPEN IF THE NIPS
 TAKE YOU ALIVE?"

10, THREE
MAINT
MAINT
MAINT
MAINT
MAINT

A NEAR MISS THREATENED TO KICK SPEAKERS INTO THE CROWD AS HE MADE HIS THIRD PASS. JOHN WITH THE HARD WIPES HIS TONGUE FROM HIS MOUTH..

INFORMATION. ALL P/As
I'VE BEEN TALKING TO
FROM CERTAIN TOWN
UNTIL THE CHRG ARE
LONGER THEN THE SE LOW
STARTS TO SHOW

2. TRADE
FOUR
WEEKS.
FOUR
WEEKS.

THE LETTERS WERE PLACED IN THE HOLLOWS, GRASS FOR THE HOLLOWS THROUGHTS
AND THE MAN WOULD SPEAK GENTLY, AND HE GAVE THEM A VOICE
CALLED, RAGGED, AND HE CALLED THEM.

CON... WE GOTTA MAKE A
B... THE "L... UP, LIVE
RATS IN A "HAP?

GET TO WHEN I'M READY,
LOSER, AND I'LL TAKE
THE WOUNDED WITH US / GET
YOUR HEAD DOWN AND USE
THAT PRIDE /

TRACEY'S VOICE WAS HARSH, COMMANDING, MIXED HIS OWN FEAR. HE WAS TRYING TO CONVINCE HIMSELF THAT THEY STILL HAD A CHANCE WHEN CAPTAIN FAIRG STARTED TO MUMBLE BEHIND HIM ..

ONLY ONE...WAY, TRACEY!
TAKE A CUE FROM THE
JAP! PLAY...DEAD...

PLAY DEAD?
YEAH...YEAH,
THAT'S IT!



THE JAPS HAD SITED A MACHINE-GUN ON A SHELTERED KNOLL ABOVE THE HOLLOW. THE UGLY CLATTER OF IT DROWNED THE VOICE OF CON TRACEY AS HE CALLED TO THE OTHERS ...

LISTEN, MEN! SCREAM, ROLL
OVER...ANYTHING --JUST SO
LONG AS THEY THINK WE'VE
BOUGHT IT. IT'S OUR
ONLY CHANCE...



THE JAP COMMANDER MUST HAVE ORDERED AN ENFILADE. THE NEXT VOLLEY WAS LONG AND VICIOUS. THE TRAPPED BRITISH SOLDIERS PLAYED THEIR PARTS WELL. BUT, FOR SOME, THE ACT OF DYING WAS REAL.



THE FIRING DIED DOWN OVER THE HOLLOW. THERE WAS NO MOVEMENT THERE NOW. NO SOUND... EXCEPT THE TRIN / VOICE FROM THE JUNGLE ...

THEY ARE EITHER DEAD OR WOUNDED! MOVE IN AND FINISH THE WORK! BUT IF THE OFFICER IS STILL ALIVE - SPARE HIM! HE WILL ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS BEFORE HE DIES!



THE JAPS HAD SWEEPED INTO BURMA ON A TIDE OF VICTORY. THE LITTLE SOLDIERS WERE GRUBBING CONFIDENTLY AS THEY MOVED DOWN INTO THE HOLLOW, MAKING PLENTY OF NOISE.

THE WHITE DOGS
FOUGHT BRAVELY, BUT
THEY ARE NO MATCH
FOR THE NIPPON!

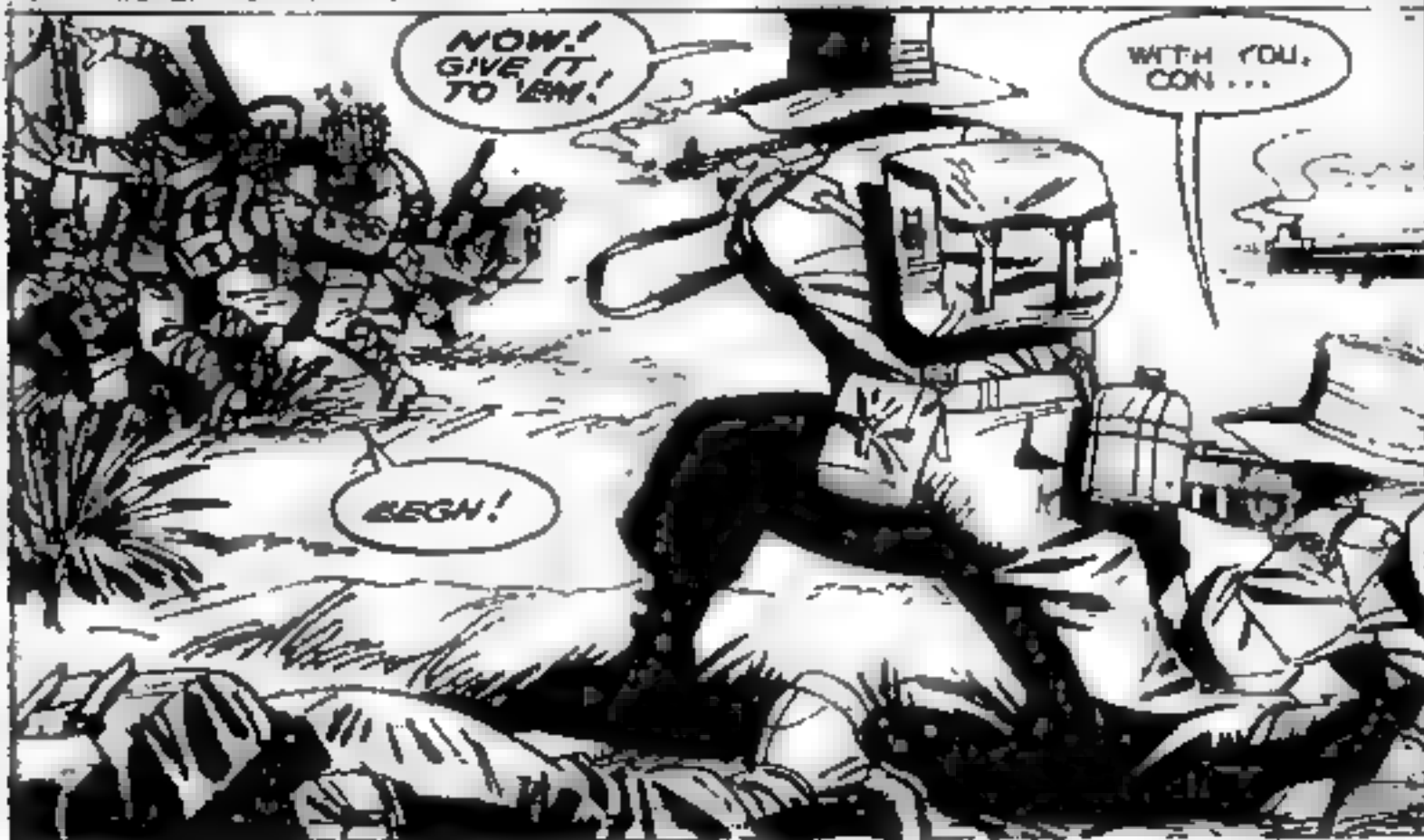


THE JAPS WERE ALL STANDING IN A TIGHT LITTLE GROUP WHEN CON TRACE, JERKED UPRIGHT, WITH HIS TOMMY-GUN SHUDDERING.

NOW!
GIVE IT
TO 'EM!

WITH YOU,
CON...

BEGH!



THEY WERE FEW IN NUMBER, THE BRITISH, BUT THEY HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE.



IT WAS
A TRICK...
AAARGH!

IT WAS OVER QUICKLY. CON TRACEY LOOKED BRIEFLY AT THE DEAD JAPS. ONLY A HANDFUL OF MEN STOOD UPRIGHT IN THE BLOOD-STAINED HOLLOW...

SEVEN OF US....
SEVEN! IS THAT
ALL THAT'S
LEFT?

WE'D ALL BE
LYING THERE, CORP..
BUT FOR YOU!

THERE'S EIGHT
OF US... IF YOU
COUNT FANE!



CAPTAIN FANE WAS STILL LYING UNCONSCIOUS AGAINST THE ROCK FACE. THE MEN LOOKED TOWARDS HIM NOW, HARSHLY...

GUESS WE MAY AS WELL HEAD BACK! ONLY FANE KNEW WHERE WE WERE GOING, ANYWAY.

I SAY WE LEAVE HIM...LIKE HE LEFT GREEN, AND THE OTHERS.



VICIOUS MOMENTS BEFORE, CON TRACEY HAD KILLED TO STAY ALIVE. IN SOME WAYS, HE WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME BUT HE WAS STILL A SOLDIER...

NO! WE'RE NOT LOWERING OURSELVES TO HIS LEVEL! WE'LL DRESS HIS WOUND, MAKE A LITTER AND WE'LL CARRY HIM, SOMEHOW.

ALL RIGHT, CON... IF THAT'S HOW YOU WANT IT! BUT IF IT WAS LEFT TO ME...



THEY TURNED SOUTH INTO THE JUNGLE, CARRYING THE ROUGH BAMBOO LITTER.

ALL RIGHT, TUG... TAKE
A BREATHER! I'LL STAY
ON THIS END.

NOTHING DOING,
CORP! IF YOU CAN
STICK IT, SO
CAN I...



THEY REACHED THE BRIGADE'S BASE CAMP SIX DAYS LATER.
TRACY WAS STILL CARRYING THE LITTER. HE LOWERED IT NOW, WITHOUT
SPEAKING.

ARE WE...
BACK...?

YEAH! WE'RE
BACK, CAPTAIN!
WHAT'S LEFT OF US!



THE OTHER MEN DID NOT HEAR THE CORPORAL'S LOW, TENSE VOICE...



BUT BEFORE WE GO DOWN THERE, CAPTAIN, THERE'S ONE THING I WANT TO GET STRAIGHT! IF YOU TELL THEM ABOUT YORK, EVEN THOUGH HE'S DEAD... THEN I'LL REPORT THAT A BRITISH OFFICER TRIED TO KILL HIMSELF... BECAUSE HE WAS SCARED OF BEING CAPTURED ALIVE

CAPTAIN FANE SMILED THINLY, BUT WITHOUT BITTERNESS. HIS WORDS SHOOK TRACEY...

I WON'T REPORT YORK, CORPORAL! BUT I'M GOING TO TELL THEM HOW WELL YOU HANDLED THINGS AFTER I WAS WOUNDED! I SHALL ALSO TELL THEM HOW I TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE!

YOU'LL REPORT THAT? BUT THEY'LL BREAK YOU

FANE SHOOK HIS HEAD WEARILY, BUT THE SMILE WAS STILL THERE...

I DON'T THINK SO, TRACEY! WHEN I TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE, IT WAS FOR A VERY GOOD REASON! BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU... EVEN NOW!



PAUL FANE WAS STILL TALKING AS THEY PICKED UP THE LITTER, WENT DOWN TO THE GREEN FIELDS AND THE CLEAN WHITE TENTS.



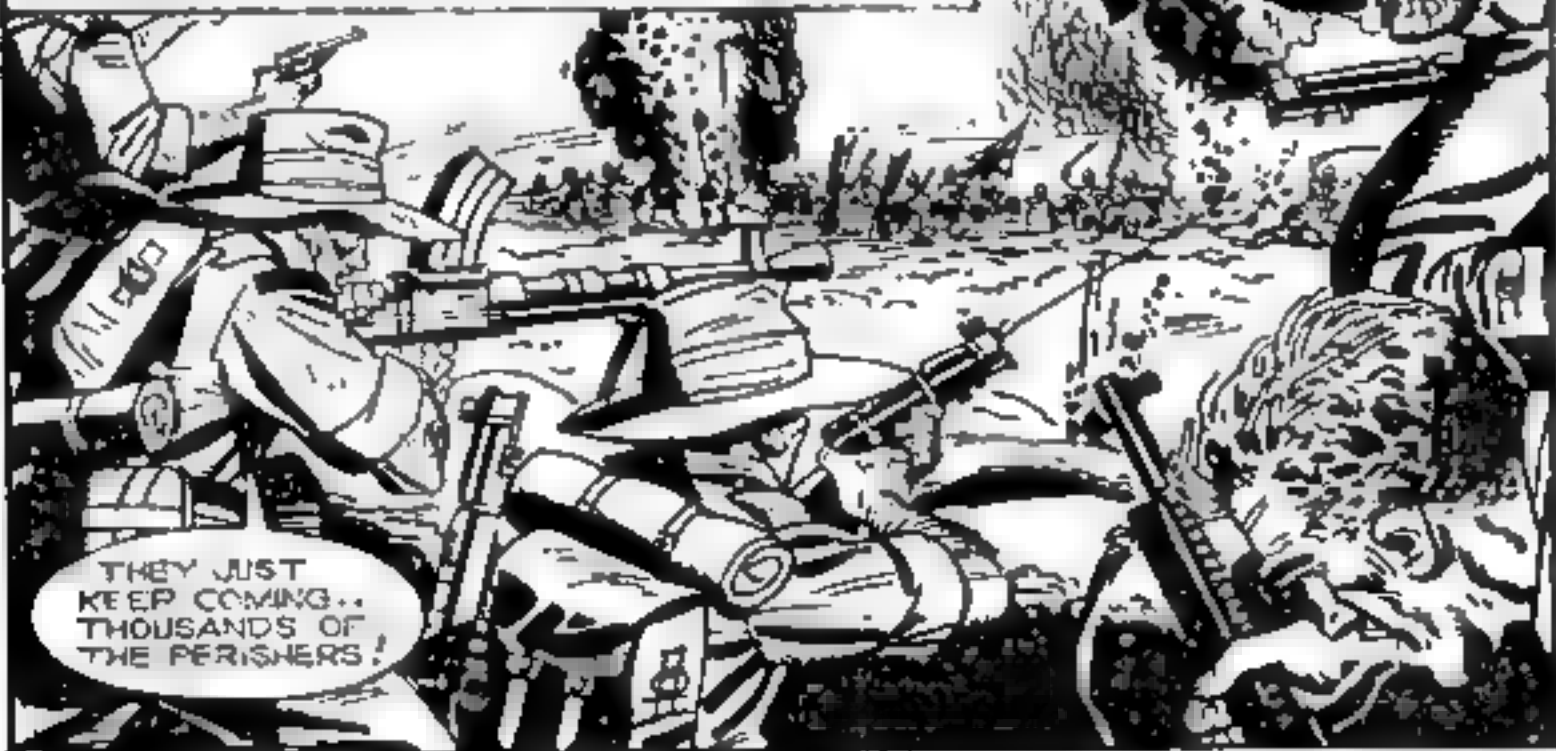
CO. TRACEY HAD LISTENED TO THE FLAT, VAGUE WORDS, BUT HE COULD NOT SEE THE MEN FALLING AND DYING... BEING LEFT TO DIE...



BUT AT THE TIME, CO. TRACEY WAS TO LEARN THE BITTER TRUTH OF CAPTAIN PAUL FANE'S WORDS, IN ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND MOST BRUTAL BATTLES OF THE BURMA CAMPAIGN.

Chapter 2. *The Ridge*

FOR TRACEY, THE LESSON BEGAN A YEAR LATER, WHEN THE JAPS ATTACKED ALONG THE WHOLE BURMA FRONT, SPLITTING THE BRITISH-CHINESE ARMIES WITH A SERIES OF LIGHTNING THRUSTS...



THE LITTLE SOLDIERS CAME ON FRANTICALLY. THEY CLIMBED OVER THEIR DEAD, CHARGED SCREAMING INTO THE MOUTHS OF THE BRITISH GUNS.



THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE WITH WHICH THE BRITISH 14TH ARMY WOULD FIGHT ITS WAY BACK INTO BURMA HAD ALREADY BEEN PLANNED. BUT FIRST THE ENEMY ADVANCE MUST BE HALTED ...

EVERY AVAILABLE REGIMENT IS BEING PULLED FROM RESERVE TO FORM A WEDGE ON WHICH THE JAPANESE OFFENSIVE MUST BE BLUNTED.

BUT HOW LONG WILL THAT TAKE, SIR?



AT LEAST TWO DAYS TO MOVE THE TROOPS TO NEW POSITIONS. I AM PLACING UNITS OF BATTLE EXPERIENCED MEN AT SEVERAL KEY-POINTS. THEIR ROLE WILL BE VITAL!

... AND UNENVYABLE! THEY'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE JAPANESE ATTACK -- WITHOUT ANY HOPE OF IMMEDIATE SUPPORT.



THE GENERAL LOOKED THOUGHTFULLY AT HIS MAP ...

THE AREA THAT MOST CONCERNS ME IS ... THE KUANA RIDGE! IF THE JAPS TAKE THAT HIGH GROUND, THEY WILL COMMAND GOOD OBSERVATION OF OUR MOVEMENTS, AND THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE WILL BE LOST ...



IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, GENTLEMEN...
THE WHOLE SUCCESS OF THE ALLIED THRUST
INTO BURMA MAY DEPEND ON THE ABILITY
OF FIFTY MEN TO HOLD THIS RIDGE FOR
FORTY-EIGHT HOURS!



THOUGH FIFTY MEN, ONE RIFLE PLATOON AND A VICKERS MACHINE-GUN SECTION,
WERE ALREADY MOVING IN TO THE KUANA RIDGE, WITH THEM MARCHED A
VETERAN CALLED CON TRACEY. BUT HE WAS A SERGEANT NOW...



EVERY MAN IN THE DETACHMENT HAD BEEN IN BURMA SINCE THE BEGINNING. THEY HAD LEARNED TO FIGHT THE JAP VICIOUSLY BUT THEY WERE STILL HUMAN ENOUGH TO GRIPE ..

ALL THIS, JUST SO WE CAN SQUAT IN THE SHIT ON A PERISHING HILL. WHAT FOR, I'D LIKE TO KNOW ..

YEAH SARGE. WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS RIDGE ANYWAY ?



CON TRACEY PAUSED. HE WAS THINKING OF ANOTHER TIME. ANOTHER PLACE, WHEN MEN HAD MARCHED TO THEIR DEATHS WITHOUT KNOWING WHY.

DON'T ASK ME, SOLDIER / I WASN'T THERE WHEN THEY THOUGHT UP TH'S LITTLE NUMBER

WELL, LET'S HOPE IT'S CUSHY, COULD DO WITH A BREATHER FROM JOHNNY JAP ..



AT THE HEAD OF THE COLUMN,
MAJOR SAM BARRETT HEARD
THE LOUD, RUEFUL VOICES...

A BREATHER! IF
ONLY THEY KNEW WHAT
THEY WERE HEADING
INTO! BUT THEY DON'T...
AND I CAN'T TELL THEM...



STUMBLING DOGGEDLY BESIDE HIS SUPERIOR OFFICER, LIEUTENANT LES
JACKSON NOTICED THE PENT-UP TENSION IN BARRETT'S FACE...

WHY THE BIG
SECRET? WHY
THE HECK CAN'T
HE TELL ~~ME~~
WHAT THIS IS
ALL ABOUT?



SAM BARRETT DID NOT SPEAK AGAIN UNTIL THEY REACHED THE RIDGE. THE HEAT WAS STIFLING UP THERE...

SERGEANT, I'M PUTTING MY H.Q. BEHIND THIS KNOLL. I WANT THE VICKERS SECTION SITED ON THE KNOLL ITSELF, AND THE RIFLEMEN DUG IN ALONG THE RIDGE SO THAT THE WHOLE NORTH SLOPE IS COVERED!

RIGHT, SIR!
I'LL GET THE
MEN TO WORK!



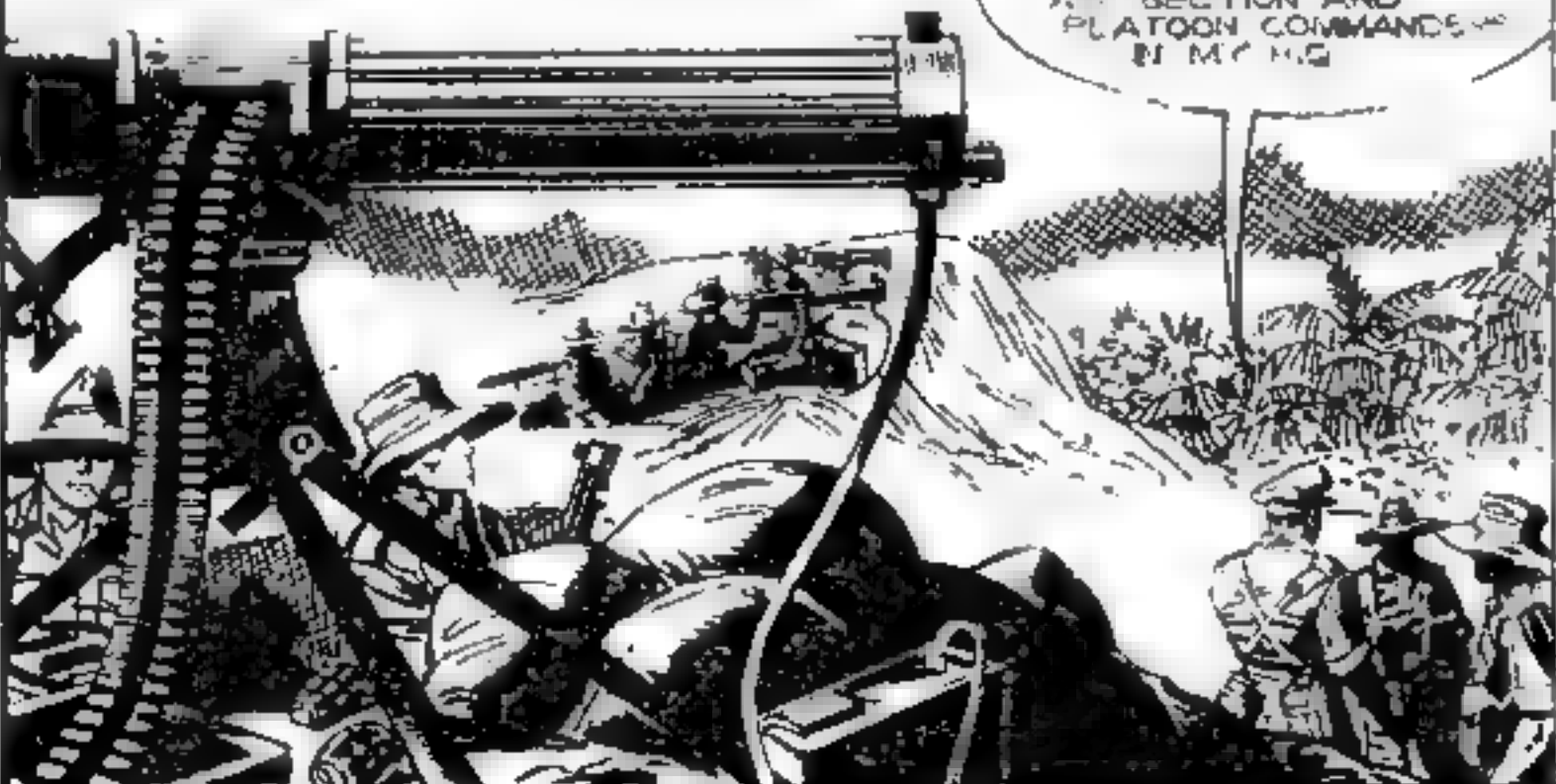
THE MEN GRUMBLED A BIT, BUT TRACEY GOT THEM WORKING. THE STEADY CLINK OF TRENCHING TOOLS ECHOED UNEASILY ACROSS THAT STRETCH OF SCRUB AND ROCK...

THIS IS NO ORDINARY HOLDING POSITION! WE'VE GOT ENOUGH AMMO TO LAST THREE DAYS! AND THE WAY WE'VE BEEN ORDERED TO DIG IN, IT'S AS IF WE'RE PREPARING FOR A SIEGE.



WITHIN SIX, EFFICIENT HOURS, THE TRENCHES
HAD BEEN DUG AND THE MACHINE-GUNS
SITED IN ENFILADE. THE LIGHT WAS FADING

THE MAN ON STAND-
ING IN EVERY SLIT
THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT
AND EVERY NIGHT WE'RE
HERE! THEN I'LL SEE
A SECTION AND
PLATOON COMMANDER
IN MCHG



THE COMMAND POST WAS
JUST A DEEP, FOUR-SIDED
PIT, FURNISHED WITH AMMO
BOXES AND THE RADIO.

SERGEANT, DETAIL HARRIS AND A TCHIE
TO KIS UP SOME OF THOSE DEEP, BOGS
TRAPS THEY'RE SO FOND OF! THOSE TRA-
P WILL BE OUR ALARM CLOCK! WHEN THE
JAPS HIT THE BOTTOM OF THAT SLOP
I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT!



LIEUTENANT JACKSON WAS ALMOST APOLOGETIC AS HE SPOKE UP ...

SR! THIS... THIS
SECRECY! THE MEN
HAVE ALREADY
GUESSED THAT T'S
GOING TO BE
TOUGH! BUT THAT'S
NOT THEIR GROUSE.
THEY WANT TO
KNOW WHY
WE'RE HERE ..
WHAT THE
FIGHTING'S
ABOUT

I'M SORRY, MISTER JACKSON!
ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THIS...
IF THE JAPS COME THROUGH THOSE
HILLS, THEY'LL HAVE TO CROSS
KUANA RIDGE! WE'VE GOT TO STOP
THEM... IF IT TAKES THE LIFE OF
EVERY MAN IN THIS UNIT
TO DO SO!

BUT WHY,
SR? WHAT
MAKES THIS
RIDGE SO
IMPORTANT?

SOMETHING LIKE ANGER FLARED IN BARRETT'S HAGGARD EYES... A BITTER, HELPLESS ANGER...

THERE'S NOTHING
I CAN TELL YOU..
NOTHING!
DO YOU HEAR?

SO THAT'S HOW
IT IS! FIGHT TO
THE LAST MAN...
AND NO QUESTIONS
ASKED.

AFTER THE MEETING, TRACEY WENT DOWN THE NORTH SLOPE IN THE CHILL, GATHERING DUFF, HARRIS AND MITCHELL WERE THERE, EATING DEATH IN THE JUNGLE ...

NEARLY FINISHED,
SARGE! WE'VE SET
MOST OF THE
GRENADES!

YEAH... WITH THE
PINS OUT OF THE OLD
JAP CREEP CRAWLING
THROUGH HERE,
HE'S HAD IT!

ON THE FLANKS OF THE POSITION WHERE THE JAPS WOULD BE WALKING, STEEN GUNS, SET AT AUTOMATIC, HAD BEEN FIXED IN THE TREES ...

SEE, ALMOST SURE FOR THE
JAPPS! THE INSTANT HE BUMPS THIS
STRAP, HE'S GOING TO GET A
FAST DOSE OF LEAD
POISONING!

SAVE SOME OF THE GREP FOR US,
MITCH! WE'LL BE STUCK UP ON THE
ROCKS LIKE A BUNCH OF ANT
SALLIES!



THE DARKNESS CAME SUDDENLY. THE MEN ON STAND-TO STARED UNEASILY DOWN INTO THE SILKY SHADOWS...

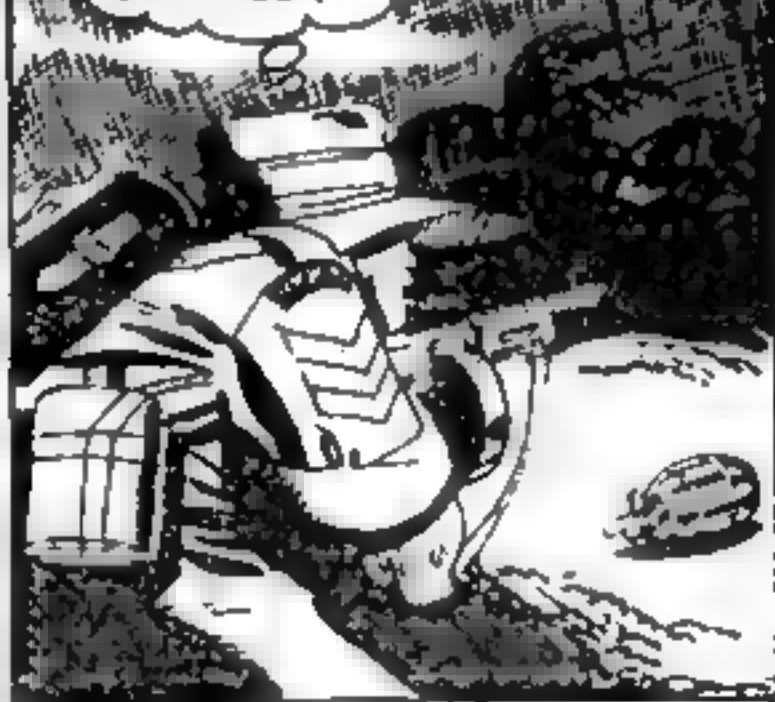
CAN'T SEE A BLOOMING THING! D'YOU RECKON THEY'RE OUT THERE, EDDY?

DUNNO! IF THEY ARE, I WISH THEY'D TELL US WHAT THE HECK THIS IS ALL IN AO OF...



SERGEANT CONTRACEY WAS UNEASY, TOO. HE KNEW HOW QUICKLY AND QUIETLY THE LITTLE SOLOAR COULD MOVE...

COME ON, NIP. IF YOU'RE COMING, LET'S GET STARTED!



THE SLIGHT, TINNY RATTLE CAME FIRST. IT WAS FOLLOWED BY THE SUDDEN BLAST AND GLARE OF EXPLOSIVES...

JAPS! THEY MUST HAVE BUMPED THE GRENADES!

AAAUGH!

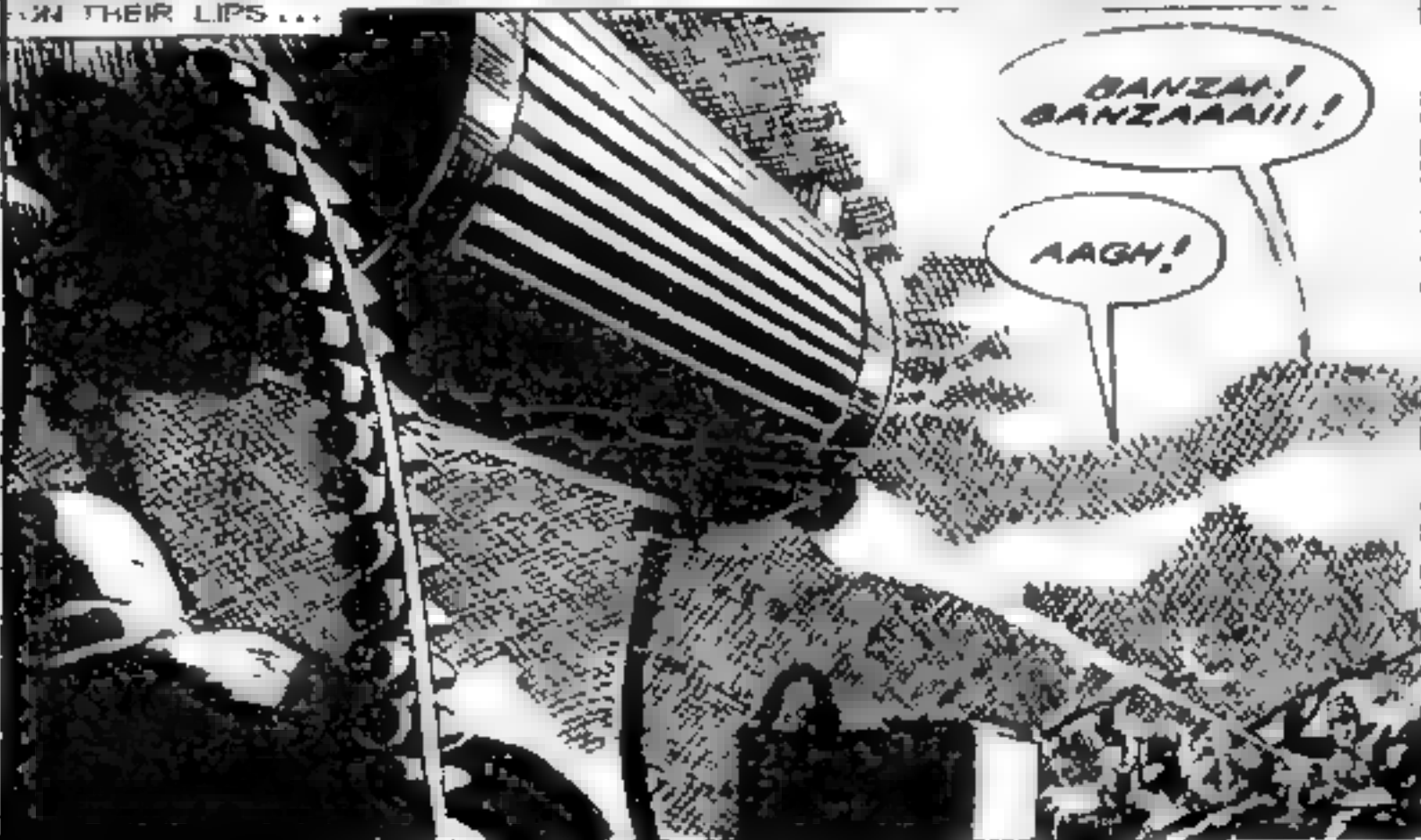


STAND-TO! FLARES, MISTER JACKSON...

THE HEAVY CARTRIDGE COMED OUT FROM THE TREE, BURST OVER THE
FRONT FACE OF THE RIDGE. IN THE STARK FLASH OF LIGHT, THEY SAW THE
JAW...



THE GUNS ROARED ON KUANA RIDGE, BUILDING A TERRIBLE GONG OF SOUND,
SMASHING DOWN THE STUBBY MEN WHO CHARGED WITH THE MAD BATTLE-CRY
ON THEIR LIPS...



THEIR FRONTAL ATTACK SWEEP ASIDE, A SMALL PARTY OF JAPS CAME ANGLING FOR THE KNOLL. IN THE DIN, NO-ONE HEARD MAJOR SAM BARRETT'S SOFT, CHOKING CRY...

KEEP AT IT,
MEN! THEY'RE
BREAKING!

UHHH...!



THE FIRST JAPANESE ATTACK CEASED AS ABRUPTLY AS IT HAD BEGUN. TRACEY AND LEO JACKSON WERE CROUCHING OVER THE HOT MUZZLES OF THEIR GUNS WHEN ONE OF THE MEN CAME LUNGING FROM THE NIGHT...

FIRST ROUND TO US.
SERGEANT! DID YOU GET ANY
IDEA OF THEIR STRENGTH?

LIEUTENANT
JACKSON, SIR!
THE C.O. ...



SAM BARRETT WAS DEAD. THE MAN BENDING OVER HIS BODY HAD AN ENVELOPE IN HIS HAND...

I SEE...
THANKS,
SOLDIER!

THE MAJOR'S GONE, SIR!
BUT HE GAVE ME THIS
JUST BEFORE HE DIED...
TOLD ME TO GIVE IT
TO YOU...



LES JACKSON RIPPED THE ENVELOPE OPEN, READ THE NEATLY-TYPED ORDER. HE LOOKED UP THEN, WITH A HAGGARD LIGHT IN HIS EYES...

SO THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE!
THAT'S WHY HE COULDN'T TELL
US! AND NOW I'M STUCK WITH
THE SAME RESPONSIBILITY...



THERE WERE MEN AROUND LES JACKSON. BUT HE LOOKED LONELY AS HE STUMBLED TOWARDS THE COMMAND POST. THE MEN WATCHED HIM GO...

SO JACKSON'S IN COMMAND!
MAYBE HE'LL PULL US OUT OF
HERE, NOW THAT THE GLORY
BOY'S BOUGHT IT!



MARK IT, SWAN!
THE MAJOR WAS NO
GLORY BOY! I DON'T
RECKON HE WANTED TO
COME UP HERE ANY
MORE THAN WE DID.

PRIVATE NICK SWAIN SCOWLED. HE WAS BIG AND SULLEN... AND HE WANTED TO STAY ALIVE.

THEN WHY THE HECK ARE WE DEFENDING THIS RIDGE? WE ALL KNOW THE MAIN PUSH IS GOING IN UP-COUNTRY! YET WE GOTTA SIT HERE AND WAIT FOR THE JAP TO COME AND GIVE US A DOSE OF COLD STEEL!



THE MEN WERE SILENT. SWAIN'S BITTER WORDS HAD AN UNPLEASANT RING OF TRUTH...

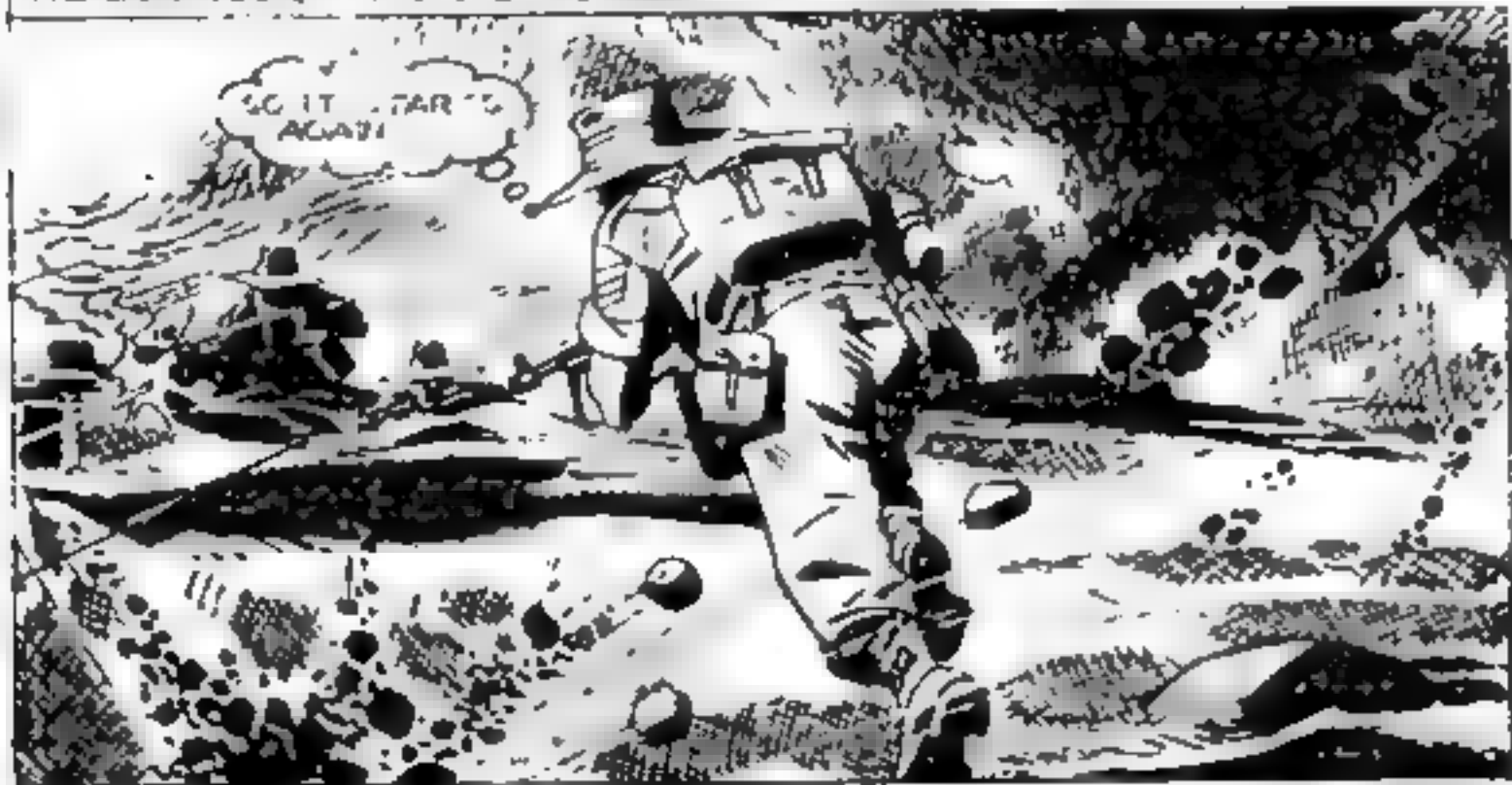
I'M TELLING YOU, MATEE... IF JACKSON DON'T SOON PULL US OUT OF HERE, I'LL KNOW THE REASON WHY! I AIN'T GONNA DIE SCRAPPING FOR A SCRUFFY BIT OF JUNGLE...

YOU'VE GOT SOME THINGS THERE, NICK!



Chapter 3. *Hell on the Hill*

THERE WERE NO MORE ATTACKS. THAT NIGHT IT WAS JUST AFTER DAWN WHEN THE JAPS BEGAN TO GUESS THE FUDGE WITH FOUR NEW TANKS...



THE BOMBARDMENT WAS AT ITS PEAK AND DEADLY. THERE WERE DEAD MEN IN THE BRITISH TRENCHES WHEN THE JAPANESE FOUR TANKS CAME OUT OF THE JUNGLE...



COVERED BY THE SMOKE FROM THE MORTAR ATTACK, THE FIRST WAVE OF JAPS GOT TO WITHIN THIRTY YARDS OF THE RIDGE-TOP BEFORE THE BRITISH COULD ENGAGE THEM...



MOST OF THE JAPS DIED IN THE FIRST, POINT-BLANK VOLLEY, BUT SOME OF THEM GOT THROUGH



IT WAS SERGEANT CON TRACEY WHO LED THE RUSH TO CLOSE THE BREACH...

GET INTO 'EM!
SMASH THE LITTLE
DEVILS!



AGAIN, THE ATTACK FARED, BEATEN BACK BY THE LASH OF THE VICKERS, THE RUTHLESS COURAGE OF THE PITFULLY FEW MEN ON KLANA RIDGE...

YAHOO... LOOK
AT THOSE JAPS
RUN! WE
CLOBBERED 'EM
THAT TIME,
NICK!

YEAH! BUT THEY
WIPE OUT HALF
THE COMPANY!
WHAT ABOUT THE
NEXT TIME...
AND THE TIME
AFTER THAT...!



CON TRACEY HEARD THE SHRILL, BITTER VOICE OF PRIVATE SWAN AND SWUNG ROUND ANGRILY...

ALL RIGHT, SWAN... THAT'S ENOUGH!

WELL, YOU TELL US, SARGE! WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE? WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS STRIP OF KUNAI GRASS?



THE SERGEANT PAUSED, FOR HE WANTED AN ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION HIMSELF, BUT HIS VOICE WAS FIRM...

I DON'T KNOW THAT, SWAN! BUT MISTER JACKSON KNOWS... AND THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME!

SURE, JACKSON KNOWS! THEN WHY DON'T HE SHARE THE BIG SECRET WITH US?

SWAN'S RIGHT, SARGE! WE GOT A RIGHT TO KNOW...



TRACEY WAS ABOUT TO REPLY WHEN THE HARSH WORDS CAME CRACKING ALONG THE RIDGE. THE WORDS THEY HAD LEARNED TO DREAD...



THE JAPS WERE CONCENTRATING ON THE GUN-PITS THIS TIME. THEIR ARMS WERE WAVING AND THE FAINT, SOFT SIGNS IN THE AIR WERE FOLLOWED BY THIN, WHPLASH EXPLOSIONS...

**BLAZES!
THEY'RE THROWING
SPRING GRENADES!**



SPRING GRENADES, FIRED BY CRUISE CATAPULTS FIXED TO THE HP, ONE OF THEM LANDED IN THE AMBUSH PIT SUPPLYING A VICKERS GUN, EXPLODING LIKE A HORRIBLE FIRECRACKER



THE JAPS WERE SURGING TOWARDS. THE SILENT GUN WHEN SERGEANT COMINLEY REACHED IT, PUSHING THE BROKEN BODIES ASIDE ...

"THIS VICKERS IS JAMMED. I'VE HAD IT!"



BUT THE MACHINE-GUN WAS STILL WORKING. THE JAPS FOUND THAT OUT ... JUST BEFORE THE SUDDEN, AWFUL ZONE OF STEEL CUT THEM DOWN ...



BROODING, PONDEROUS SILENCE ENVELOPED THE RIDGE AGAIN. CON TRACE ' SAT THERE, BEHIND THE GUN, STARING AT THE BODIES.

IT'S CRAZY... ALL THIS FIGHTING AND KILLING JUST TO HOLD ON TO A USELESS PIMPLE OF EARTH!

NICE WORK, SERGEANT! I THOUGHT WE'D HAD IT, THAT TIME!



THE VOICE OF LEUTENANT JACKSON... ONLY INTERRUPTED THE SERGEANT'S RISING ANGER...

SO FAR, WE'VE HELD THEM! BUT IT LOOKS BAD, TRACEY! WE'RE DOWN TO TWENTY FIT MEN!

TWENTY! THEN WHY DON'T WE PULL OUT & FALL BACK TO THAT GULLY BETWEEN THE RIDGE... GET UP NEW POSITIONS?



THE GREY-FACED LEUTENANT WAS BITING HIS LIP, SHAKING HIS HEAD AT TRACEY...

ALL RIGHT, SR... SO WE BIT ON THIS RIDGE. BUT WHY? WHY DO WE HAVE TO COMMIT SUICIDE?

I CAN'T TELL YOU, TRACEY! I WISH TO HEAVEN I COULD...



IT WAS JUST THEN THAT THE SECOND MORTAR ATTACK BEGAN. THE FEW MEN LEFT ALIVE IN THE TRENCHES COVERED AS THE WORLD SHUDDERED AND BOILED AROUND THEM...



WHY DON'T THEY PULL US OUT?

IS THERE NO END TO IT?

BY THE KNOLL, LIEUTENANT JACKSON HAD TURNED AWAY FROM TRACEY. HE WAS RUNNING TOWARDS THE TRENCHES WHEN A MORTAR SHELL EXPLODED SIX FEET AWAY FROM HIM...



THE BARRAGE THRASHED ON THE EARTH SHUDDERED CONTINUOUSLY AS TRACEY LIFTED THE JUMP, BROKEN BODY OF THE OFFICER...





IN A FEW HOURS FROM NOW THE MAIN ARM / GROUP WILL START ADVANCING DOWN THE MAUNGDAW ROAD / IT'S THE BIG ATTACK / TRACEY... AIMED AT THE JAP'S FLANK

A COUNTER-ATTACK! I SEE, SIR! BUT... HOW IS IT CONNECTED WITH KUANA RIDGE?

THE FACT, CHANGING WORDS DREW STRENGTH FROM SOMEWHERE.

IF THE JAPS TOOK THIS RIDGE, THEY'D BE IN A POSITION TO CUT THE ROAD... HOLD UP THE CAMPAIGN FOR MONTHS / THAT'S WHY THE JAPS COULDN'T BE TOLD / IF ONE OF THEM / IS CAPTURED

CAPTURED! OF COURSE!



TRACEY WAS GETTING THE GIST OF IT NOW.

...IF THE POOR DEVIL
KNEW ABOUT THE BUILD-UP,
THE NIPS WOULD SOON TORTURE
IT OUT OF HIM! THE WHOLE
OFFENSIVE WOULD BE
THREATENED! I UNDERSTAND
NOW, SIR... WHY YOU COULDN'T
TELL THE MEN... WHY WE'VE
GOT TO HOLD THIS
RIDGE...



BUT THE LIEUTENANT COULD NOT ANSWER. SERGEANT CON TRACEY WAS IN
COMMAND OF THE MEN ON KUANA RIDGE...

...AND I'VE GOT TO
MAKE THEM FIGHT, AND
DIE... WITH NO QUESTIONS
ASKED! AM I TOUGH
ENOUGH FOR THAT?



Chapter 4. *Burden of Command*

THE MORTAR BARRAGE WAS THINNING. IN HIS TRENCH, PRIVATE LUCK SWAN WAS YELLING THROUGH THE BRUTAL CONCUSSIONS...

THIS IS CRAZY! IT'S SUICIDE!
THE NIPS CAN HAVE THIS ROTTEN
RIDGE! I'M NOT GOING TO DIE
LIKE A RAT IN A TRAP!

SHUT UP, SWAN, AND STAND
TO! ANY MINUTE NOW, AND
THOSE LITTLE PERILERS
WILL BE COMING UP HERE.



THE BARRAGE CEASED ABRUPTLY. THEY CROUCHED THERE, IN THE HOT SILENCE, WAITING FOR THE SCREAMING MEN TO LEAP FROM THE JUNGLE...

COME ON, NIP...
IF YOU'RE COMING,
GET IT OVER
WITH!

THEY'RE
PLAYING ON
OUR NERVES!

SOMEONE OUGHT TO
TELL THEM THEY'VE GOT
NOTHING TO BEAT!
WE'RE THE ONLY ONES
LEFT ALIVE!



BY NOW, CON TRACEY HAD MADE A COMPLETE CHECK OF THE SAVAGED BRITISH POSITIONS. HE LOOKED ONLY BRIEFLY AT THE SHATTERED COMMAND POST...

"THE RADIO'S HAD IT WHICH MEANS I CAN'T EVEN FIND OUT HOW LONG WE'VE GOT TO HOLD THIS PLACE. NOT THAT IT MAKES MUCH DIFFERENCE, ANYWAY."



THE SCUFFLE OF BOOTS MADE HIM TURN. THERE WERE ONLY TWELVE RAGGED MEN BEHIND NICK SWAN. THE BIG PRIVATE LOOKED UGLY, AND DANGEROUS...

"YOU FOOLS! GET BACK TO YOUR TRENCHES!"

"WE SAW JACKSON'S BODY, TRACEY... SO WE KNOW YOU'RE IN COMMAND! YOU'RE GOING TO PULL US OUT, AREN'T YOU?"

"YOU'VE GOT TO, SARGE! WE CAN STILL GET OUT DOWN THE SOUTH SIDE... TAKE OUR CHANCES WITH THE JUNGLE."



CON TRACEY SHOOK HIS HEAD. THE WORDS CAME OUT, HARD AND CRUEL:

WE'RE NOT MOVING OUT!
MAYBE WE CAN'T HOLD THIS
RIDGE MUCH LONGER, BUT
WE'RE GOING TO TRY!

IT'S NO GOOD, TRACEY!
IF YOU WANT TO STAY HERE
AND DIE - YOU'RE WELCOME!
BUT WE'RE GETTING OUT!



THE SERGEANT'S TOMMY-GUN SWUNG UPWARDS. CON TRACEY KNEW NOW
WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE HATED...

YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID,
SWAIN! WE'RE STAYING! I'LL
NAIL THE FIRST MAN WHO
TRIES TO MAKE A BREAK!

DON'T BE A
FOOL, TRACEY!
YOU CAN'T
STOP US!



Shot In the Dark

THE SERGEANT MIGHT HAVE PULLED THE TRIGGER. IT WAS THE SUDDEN, DISTANT CRACKLE OF FANATICAL VOICES THAT STOPPED HIM...

**BANZAI!
BANZAAAA!!!**

HERE
THEY
COME!

TWO OF YOU MAN
THAT VEHICLES! THE
REST SQUEAL OUT
ALONG THE RULL!

DISPERATION LENT ACCURACY TO THE HANDFUL OF BRITISH GUNS AS THEIR FIRE MET THE JAPS HALF WAY UP THE ROAD.

RAAGH!

**AIIEE!
THAT'S FINE LWB
FAGGERS!**

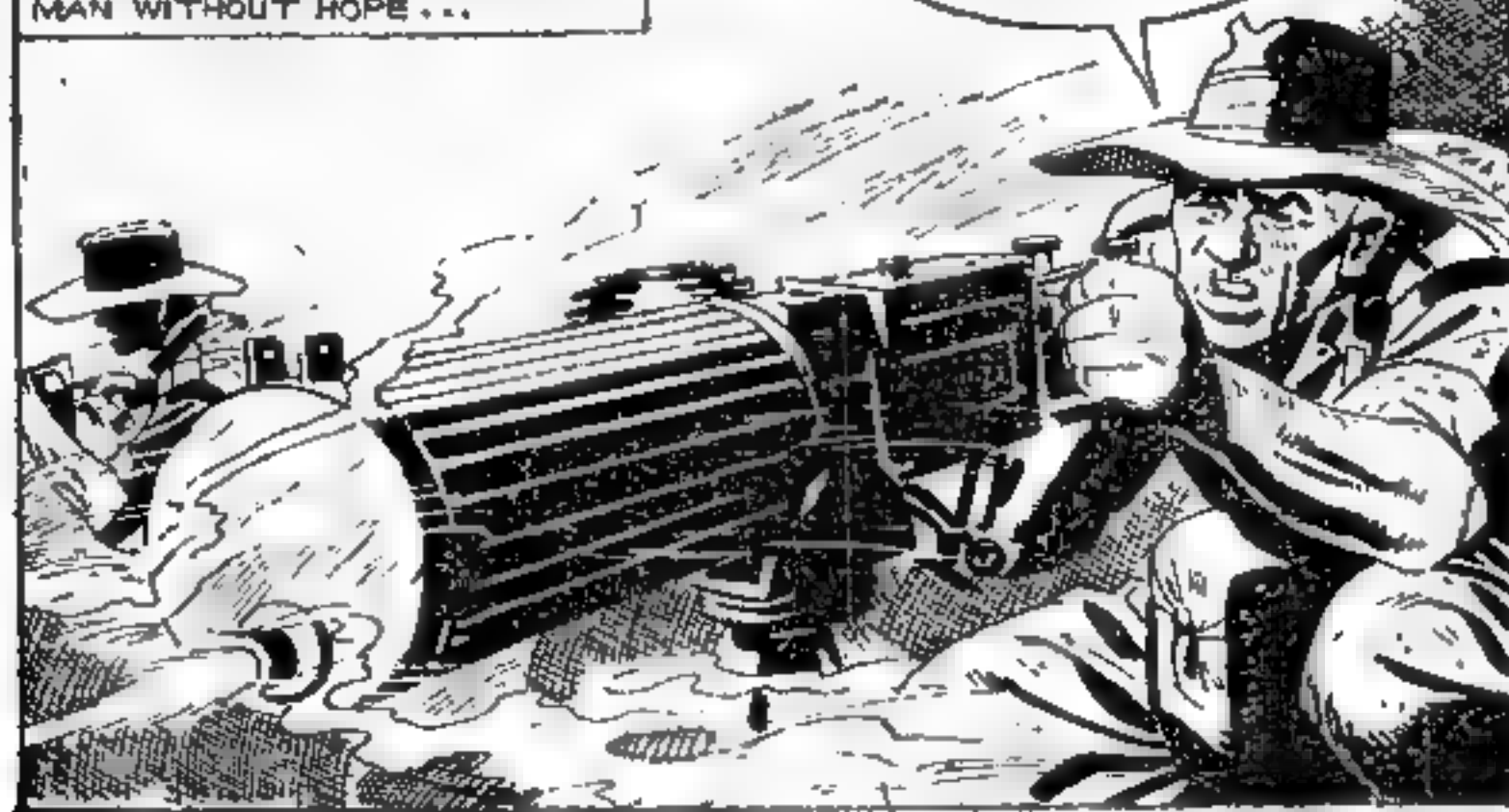
THE JAPS CAME ON, FIRING WILDLY FROM THE HIP. THERE WERE ONLY SIX MEN NOW, FIGHTING TO HOLD THAT STUMP OF ROCK ...

COME ON, YOU
LITTLE PERISHERS!
COME ON!



THE JAPS RECOILED FROM THE STEADY, MERCILESS BELLOW OF THE VICKERS. NICK SWAIN WAS MANNING THE GUN ... FIGHTING WITH THE DESPERATION OF A MAN WITHOUT HOPE ...

IF I'VE GOTTA
DIE, I'LL TAKE A
FEW OF YOU WITH
ME ...



Shot in the Dark

BUT NICK SWAIN DID NOT DIE. ONE MOMENT, THE SHAPES WERE THERE, A SCREAMING, STUMBLING MASS OF INFANTRY, THEN CON TRACEY WAS YELLING

HOLD IT,
SWAIN! THEY'RE
GONE!

GONE ... BUT
I DON'T GET IT!
WONDER WHAT THE
LITTLE BLIGHTERS
ARE COOKING UP
NOW ...



CON TRACEY WAS LOOKING AT THE UGLY PATTERN OF DEATH ... THE TWISTED SHAPES OF MEN WHO HAD FOUGHT AND LIED FOR KUANA RIDGE ...

MAYBE THEY FIGURE THEY'VE
LOST ENOUGH MEN! THEY KNOW
THERE ISN'T MUCH TO STOP
THEM NOW!

YEAH! WE'RE ALL
THAT'S LEFT NOW.
GARG! JUST YOU...
AND ME.



THE TWO MEN WERE SEARCHING THE SILENT JUNGLE WITH GRIM EYES. THEY DID NOT NOTICE THE SLIGHT MOVEMENT AMONG THE Huddled BODIES, CLOSE TO THE KNOL.

WHAT A WAY TO GO - KILLED BY A JACOTAR BOMB IN THE FOREMAN RIDGE! IT JUST DON'T GO A RIGHT, SARGE



THE SINGLE RIFLE-SHOT PAIRED LOUDLY AROUND THE RIDGE. NICK SWART WAS STILL GRIPPING WHEN THE BULLET HIT HIM ...

AAAGH!

SWART...!



THE WOUNDED JAP WAS RISING TO HIS KNEES WHEN CON TRACEY PICKED HIM OUT. THE FANATICAL LITTLE SOLDIER HAD NO CHANCE TO GET IN A SECOND SHOT.



IT TOOK ALL TRACEY'S STRENGTH TO DRAG NICK SWAIN BEHIND THE KNOLL. THE BIG MAN WAS GASPING PAINFULLY...

GOTTA GO... SOMETIME... I SUPPOSE, SARGE. BUT WHY HERE... ON THIS USELESS... STRIP OF DIRT?

WE HELD THIS RIDGE TO STOP THE JAPS SEEING OUR MAIN FORCE ADVANCING DOWN THE MALINGDAW ROAD. IT HAD TO BE DONE.



THE BIG PRIVATE DIED WITH A SMILE ON HIS LIPS. NOW TRACEY WAS ALONE...



THE UNCANNY SILENCE WAS SHATTERED BY THE HIGH-PITCHED VOICE OF A JAPANESE OFFICER...

COME OUT,
BRITISH TOMMEE.
SURRENDER TO
US -- WE NO
HARM YOU...



TRACEY'S MOUTH TWISTED IN A BITTER GRIN. HE KNEW HOW MUCH VALUE TO PLACE ON THE JAPANESE PROMISE. AT BEST, SURRENDER WOULD MEAN THE LIVING DEATH OF A JAP P.O.W. CAMP -- AT THE WORST, BRUTAL TORTURE IN AN ATTEMPT TO EXTRACT ANY INFORMATION HE MIGHT KNOW.

NOW I KNOW HOW CAPTAIN FANE FELT. HE KNEW HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO STAND THE JAPS' TORTURE, SO HE WAS PREPARED TO TAKE HIS OWN LIFE. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER WAY... IF I'VE GOT TO DIE, I'M GOING TO DIE FIGHTING!



TRACEY CLIMBED SLOWLY TO HIS FEET, SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE SKY-LINE, A PERFECT TARGET FOR THE JAP RIFLES. HE STOOD TALKING BACK HIS TOMMY-GUN AND SHOUTING HIS DEFIANCE...

HERE I COME, YOU PERISHIN' N PS / BETTER KILL ME FAST -- OR I'LL KILL YOU!



AS THE TWO WERE TAKEN TO THE OFFICE, A GREAT VIEW OF THE CITY WAS SEEN. THE TWO WERE TAKEN TO THE OFFICE, A GREAT VIEW OF THE CITY WAS SEEN. THE TWO WERE TAKEN TO THE OFFICE, A GREAT VIEW OF THE CITY WAS SEEN.



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THOSE MORTAR BOMBS HERALDED THE TURN OF THE TIDE. UNKNOWN TO TRACEY, A FULL COMPANY OF MEN, JUST ARRIVED FROM THE RESERVE UNITS, WAS BACKING HIM UP NOW. THE JAP RANKS BROKE AND SCATTERED...



AT LAST, EXHAUSTED, TRACEY STOPPED AND LOOKED AROUND HIM DAZEDLY. HE HAD RUN HIMSELF TO A STANDSTILL... BUT HE HAD BOOKE A CHARMED LIFE DURING HIS ONE-MAN ATTACK. THE CAPTAIN COMMANDING THE NEWLY-ARRIVED UNIT, CAME UP TO HIM...

YOU CAN TAKE IT EASY NOW, SERGEANT. THE FOURTEENTH ARMY'S HERE. THE MAIN ATTACK HAS BEEN LAUNCHED, AND WE'RE MOPPING THE JAPS UP BEFORE THEY GET A CHANCE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.





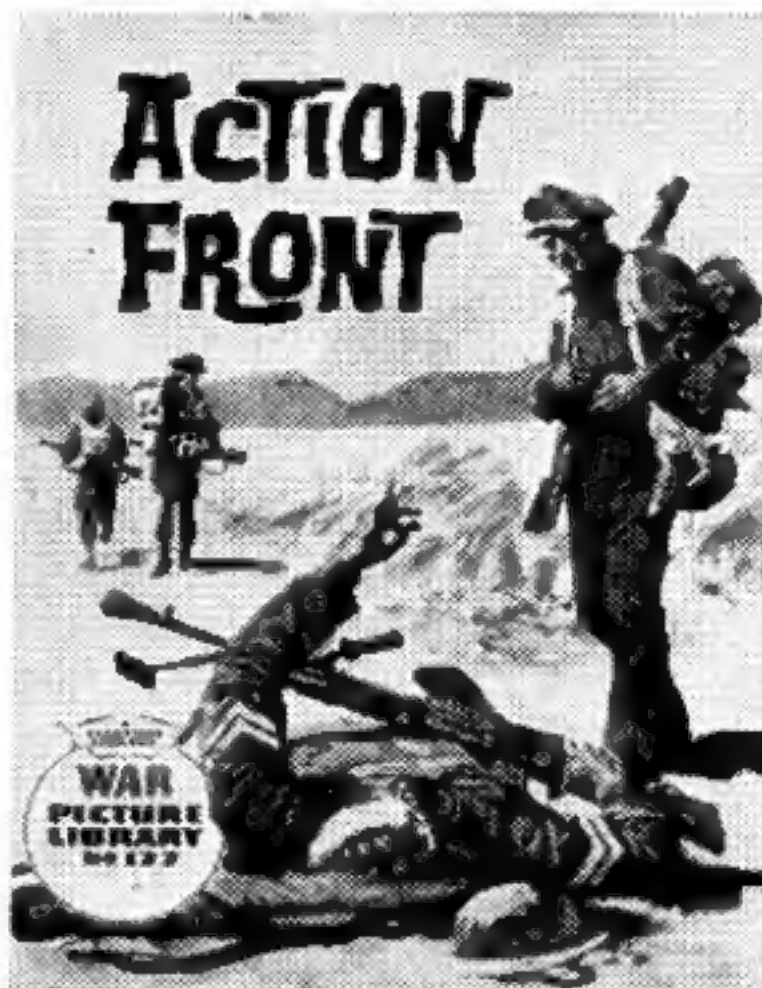
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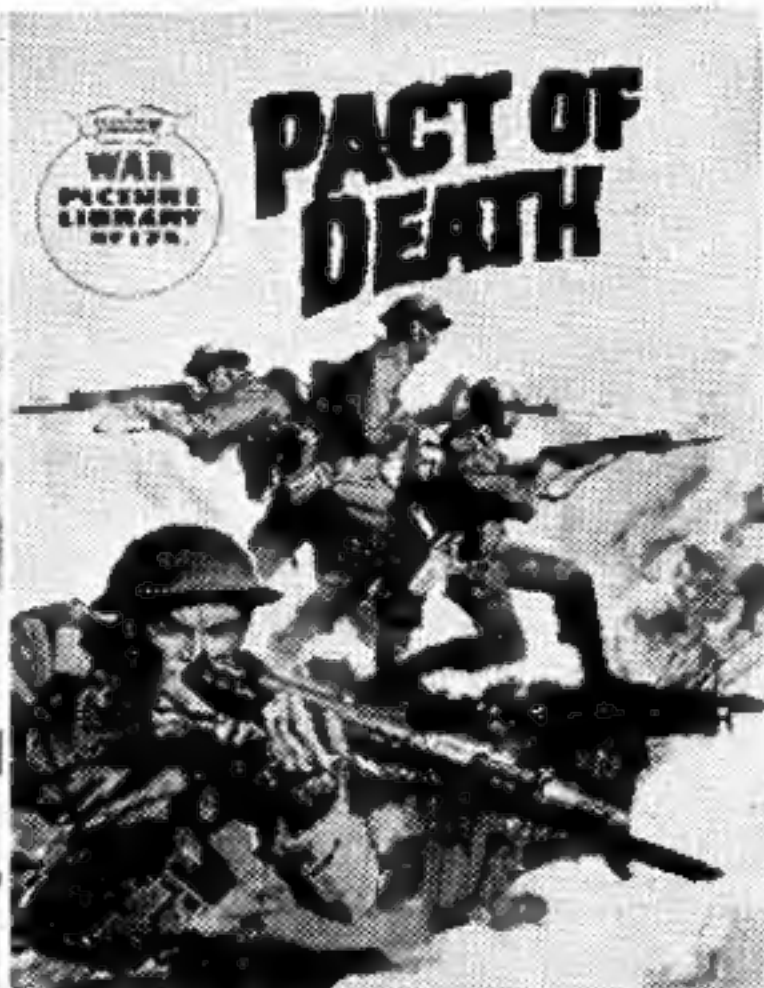
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